

DEDICATION  
OF THE  
FOWLER  
LIBRARY BUILDING

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CONCORD, N. H.











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Concord, N. H. Public Library

# EXERCISES

—AT—

## THE DEDICATION

—OF THE—

# FOWLER LIBRARY BUILDING

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

OCTOBER 18, 1888



CONCORD, N. H.  
PRINTED BY REPUBLICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION  
1889

286450 / 33  
18. 4.



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## Proceedings of the City Government.

At the regular meeting of the City Government, held February 25, 1888, His Honor the Mayor laid the following communication before the Aldermen and Council in joint convention assembled :

50 STATE ST.,

BOSTON, Feb. 6, 1888.

*To the Honorable the Mayor and City Council of Concord, New Hampshire :*

GENTLEMEN : In behalf of my sister, Clara M. Fowler, and myself, I wish to make a formal announcement of our intention to present to the City of Concord a library building, for the use of the Public Library, as a memorial of our late father and mother, Asa Fowler and Mary C. K. Fowler. With this end in view, we have purchased the estate on the corner of North State and School streets, and have made a contract with Mr. E. B. Hutchinson to alter the house into a library building, according to plans furnished by Mr. C. Howard Walker, architect, of Boston. The building is to be ready for occupancy August 1, 1888. Our object in notifying you at this time is two-fold : We wish the City Council to have actual knowledge of the proposed new library building before the question of the annual library appropriation comes up before them ; and we would like to have a committee

of citizens appointed by you to act as an Advisory Building Committee, such committee to be also authorized to agree upon the terms of the deed of gift, and to accept the same in behalf of the city. We would suggest the names of the Hon. B. A. Kimball, Hon. William L. Foster, and Charles R. Corning, Esq., as members of this committee.

Respectfully yours,

WILLIAM P. FOWLER.

On motion of Councilman Parker, the communication was accepted, and referred to the Mayor and three members of the City Council.

The chair appointed Councilman Parker and Aldermen Rolfe and J. C. Ordway, who, with the Mayor, constitute said committee.

Subsequently, on motion of Councilman Fernald, the vote adopting Councilman Parker's motion was reconsidered.

On motion of Councilman Dwight, the Mayor, the Hon. B. A. Kimball, Hon. William L. Foster, and Charles R. Corning, Esq., were appointed the Advisory Committee asked for in the foregoing communication.

The Advisory Committee organized with the Hon. William L. Foster chairman, and Charles R. Corning, Esq., clerk, and proceeded to discharge its duties. The committee held several meetings, at which matters pertaining to the plans of the library building were fully discussed and suggestions made, in which both Mr. Fowler and Mr. Walker, the architect, fully acquiesced. At the last meeting the deed was unanimously accepted, and the record thereof was sent to the City Government.

At the regular meeting of the City Government, held October 27, 1888, His Honor the Mayor laid the following report before the Board of Aldermen and Council in joint convention assembled :

The committee appointed by the Council in convention as an Advisory Committee in the matter of the Fowler Library Building made the following report, which was unanimously adopted :

*To the City Council :*

CONCORD, October 15, 1888.

At a meeting of the Advisory Committee, held at the office of the Hon. William L. Foster on the evening of October 15th, Mr. William P. Fowler, in behalf of himself and Clara M. Fowler, presented to the city of Concord a deed of gift conveying to said city the Fowler Library Building, which deed of gift was, on motion of the Hon. John E. Robertson, unanimously accepted.

WILLIAM L. FOSTER.

JOHN E. ROBERTSON.

BENJAMIN A. KIMBALL.

CHARLES R. CORNING.

Alderman John C. Ordway introduced the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted :

*Resolved*, That the thanks of the city be tendered to William P. and Clara M. Fowler for the munificent and timely gift of a Public Library Building, so generously presented by them to the city ; that the same be accepted, with a profound appreciation of the great benefit conferred upon its citizens, and that the terms of acceptance agreed upon by the Advisory Committee, appointed for that purpose, be fully agreed to and ratified.

# City Government, 1887, 1888.

## MAYOR.

JOHN E. ROBERTSON.

## ALDERMEN.

Ward 1—JOHN H. ROLFE.

“ 2—JOHN E. FRYE.

“ 3—GEORGE H. SPEAD.

“ 4—RICHARD M. ORDWAY,  
WILLIAM E. HOOD,  
JOHN C. ORDWAY.

“ 5—ALBERT B. WOODWORTH,  
IRVIN S. RING.

“ 6—LELAND A. SMITH,  
GEORGE O. DICKERMAN,  
DAVID J. ABBOT.

“ 7—HENRY D. CELLEY.

COMMON COUNCIL.

PRESIDENT, FRANK J. BATCHELDER.

Ward 1—JOHN McNEIL.

“ 2—SAMUEL M. LOCKE.

“ 3—JAMES W. WELCH.

“ 4—JAMES K. KENNEDY,  
CHARLES S. PARKER,  
JOHN REARDON.

“ 5—WARREN H. CORNING,  
WILLIAM J. FERNALD.

“ 6—FRANK J. BATCHELDER,  
CHARLES C. PERKINS,  
JOSIAH E. DWIGHT.

“ 7—FRANCIS H. UPTON.

# Public Library.



## TRUSTEES.

Ward 1—ABIAL ROLFE.

“ 2—JOSEPH T. CLOUGH.

“ 3—PAUL R. HOLDEN.

“ 4—WILLIAM L. FOSTER.

“ 5—CHARLES R. CORNING.

“ 6—JAMES S. NORRIS.

“ 7—WILLIAM W. FLINT.

## LIBRARIAN.

DANIEL F. SECOMB.

## ASSISTANT.

CLARA F. BROWN.

## Dedicatory Exercises.

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Long before the appointed time, the Library was thronged with people, so that the seats were quickly occupied, and many were obliged to stand during the exercises.

At half past two o'clock His Honor Mayor Robertson called the company to order, and announced that the exercises would begin with the singing of an original hymn by the choir of the Unitarian church, consisting of Mrs. L. F. Gillette, soprano; Miss Minnie Hayden, contralto; Mr. J. H. Jackman, tenor; Mr. O. B. Wetmore, bass; with Mrs. F. A. Straw as accompanist.

This is a place where all may come  
To drink at Learning's stream;  
This is the scholar's chosen home,  
The temple of his dream.

Here Art and Science, hand in hand,  
Shall welcome kind extend,  
And the nine Muses' sacred band  
Their inspiration lend.



Oft gath'ring here may youth and age  
Worship at Wisdom's shrine,  
And, gleanings from the storied page,  
Make their dull lives divine.

And eloquent of filial love,  
Long may this building stand :  
A living fountain may it prove  
Of knowledge in the land.

The Mayor then introduced the Rev. AUGUSTUS WOODBURY, D. D., of Providence, Rhode Island, formerly of Concord, who delivered the following

## ADDRESS.

It is with a feeling of peculiar gratification that I undertake the duty which has been assigned to me in the exercises of this day. It was here that I began my professional career; and hither I return year after year to renew the associations of my early manhood, and to find in myself the consciousness of an increasing interest in the affairs not only of this prosperous community, but also of the state that gave me, nigh upon forty years ago, a cordial greeting and a hospitable welcome. During the interval Time has wrought many changes. Men and women whom then I knew as conspicuous for personal integrity and public spirit have passed away, to give place to



a younger generation that does well to make enduring record of their worth of character and to emulate their virtue.

A multitude of honored and honorable names occur to me as I recall the past. Every profession and every calling had eminent examples to present, and I should be tempted, did not the occasion press upon me its limits, to indulge in a train of reminiscence which would weary your patience. If to-day we offer our grateful tribute to the memory of those of whom this structure—the mark of a generous filial devotion—is a fitting memorial, we do not detract from the good repute which we honor in the rest, but rather add to it. For he who stands in a worthy company a recognized equal and peer, really increases the sum of its worth, as the good estate of each augments the common wealth. In the community of character, when one member is honored, all the members rejoice.

I spoke of the duty which had been assigned to me. I regard it as no less a privilege, for it happened that these two friends of ours were among the earliest to welcome me and to open their hearts and home for my reception when I came to make here my first venture in active life. The acquaintance then formed was the beginning of a lifelong friendship. The added years deepened my respect for the sterling man,—both of law and letters,—who, then diligent in his profession, rose step by step till he stood at the head; for the accomplished woman

who was his companion both in heart and mind, who stimulated his ambition and gratefully shared his well earned honors and abundant success. To repeat to you now the story of their life is to tell over again a familiar tale. It seems scarcely needed among the friends and neighbors with whom all their active and useful years were spent. But for the boys and girls of the present day, who are to become the men and women of the next century, the fathers and mothers of future generations that are to receive the benefits of the library here established, and for those generations themselves, it may be well to draw at least the outline of their career.

The son and daughter to whose loving interest the city owes this beautiful and commodious building have had a very clear conception of what would be most appropriate to commemorate parental virtue. In thus honoring father and mother they assuredly honor themselves. Memorial gifts of such a character as this are more than twice blest. A library, with its treasures for the enrichment of young and old, with a wealth that outlasts all changes and endures for all time, keeps fresh forever the memory of those who have been its benefactors.

What, now, do the names that are inscribed on yonder wall represent? ASA FOWLER was born in Pembroke,—almost within sight of this place,—on the 23d of February, 1811. Working on his father's farm, having, like other country boys, his eight or ten weeks of winter schooling and little more than a

year's instruction at Blanchard academy in his native town, he was able by diligent study to prepare himself for the Sophomore class of Dartmouth college, which he entered in 1830. Graduating in 1833, he taught an academy in Topsfield, Mass., for a short time; then read law, beginning his studies in March, 1834, with James Sullivan and Charles H. Peaslee; entered upon the practice of his profession in Concord, in February, 1837; and was married July 13, of the same year, to Mary Cilley Knox. Thenceforward this city was his home, and here he frequently received the marks of his fellow-townsmen's confidence and esteem, serving them for twenty years on the school committee, and in the legislature for five years,—wherever, indeed, his wise counsel and clear judgment were required.

The state, too, acknowledged his ability and worth. He was clerk of the senate for six years, 1835–1841, in his early life; he was speaker of the house of representatives for one year, 1872; he was solicitor for Merrimack county for four years, 1861–1865; he was a member of the commission for revising the statutes, 1865–1867; he was once a candidate for governor, 1855, nominated by a party which had a brief but honorable history; and, finally, his official life may be said to have culminated in a term of nearly six years' service, 1855–1861, as an associate justice of the supreme court. He retired from practice in 1877. His closing years were solaced by congenial studies in English literature, by the appre-

ciative enjoyment of foreign travel,—visiting Europe in 1878 and again in 1883,—and the agreeable association of friends who shared his literary tastes and his cordial hospitality in his happy and well ordered home. He died at San Rafael, California, whither he had gone with his daughter, in quest of health, on the 26th of April, 1885.

MARY CILLEY KNOX, great-granddaughter of Gen. Joseph Cilley of Revolutionary fame, was born in Epsom, September 15, 1815. She received her academic education at New Hampton, in the institution which numbers among its alumni and alumnae some of the best and fairest of New Hampshire men and women. She was remembered long afterward for her proficiency in study, both of literature and art. Upon her attendance at the observance of the semi-centennial anniversary of the academy, not many years ago, she received a hearty greeting from her former associates, as one in whom the lapse of years had not weakened the ties of affection and esteem.

She was married to Mr. Fowler, as already stated, in 1837, and after an unbroken union of nearly fifty years, died on the 11th of October, 1883, leaving husband and children to mourn the departure of one who had been a sagacious counsellor as well as a loving wife, and an affectionate companion and friend as well as a wise parent. All this is but a bare recital of commonplace events. There was a far deeper experience, which is full of interest and signifi-

cance. For through the years which these events mark, a structure of character was rising from its deep foundations, firm, compact, and strong, till it stood forth, in its simple integrity, beautiful, complete, and enduring.

It is no derogation from the originality of Judge Fowler's manhood to say that it was in part the product of the institutions of his native state. Born, nourished, and reared in one of her substantial country homes, educated in her schools and college, winning his way to fame and fortune, and spending his active and professional life wholly within her borders, he undoubtedly owed much to the influences and forces with which New Hampshire trains her sturdy sons. But if in some respects he was her debtor, in others she owed much to him. For the state is always indebted for her fair repute to the men and women whom she rears. Here, certainly, beneath the shadows of these granite hills, and up and down these lovely valleys, live sons and daughters,—a goodly family,—of whom any mother might be proud.

From the beginning, until now, the history of the nation would miss some of its most illustrious characters and events if the deeds of New Hampshire men and women were left unwritten. Both Asa Fowler and Mary Knox were of the good stock; and, after all, it is blood that tells. Their virtues were thoroughly characteristic. Thrift, industry, independence, strength of mind, clearness of thought, per-



sistence of purpose, a firm substratum of common-sense, an accurate perception of the reason why, and an unshaken resolution in converting reason into reality,—the features are unmistakable. Add to these the sound learning which the New Hampshire academy and college give, the graceful culture which continued study and wide reading impart, the patriotic and public fidelity which is the product of a deep-seated love of liberty and justice, and the manhood and womanhood that are here commemorated are plainly apparent to our judgment.

Certainly it is no ordinary manhood, no commonplace womanhood. There was a thoroughness of knowledge as well as a strength of character in Judge Fowler which made him a man of mark in your community and throughout the state. He had a certain native ruggedness of nature which well comported with his stalwart frame. His speech was incisive and direct, his action serious and resolute. There was no sophistry in his logic. His conscience dealt with no question of casuistry. His judgment was rarely at fault, and his decision of a case seldom required a review.

He was by nature and conviction opposed to the national wrong of slavery and the social evil of intemperance. All good causes which had for their end the improvement of human conditions and the promotion of human welfare found in him a strong and sincere advocate. No shuffling or evasion marked or marred the action of his mind. Straightforward

and open as the day, he made and held his position without equivocation. Liberal in his religious opinions, he was firm in his convictions. Leaving little to traditional belief, and less to forms of words, he formed his own opinions, and held them with undaunted spirit and unswerving loyalty. Withal, he loved nature and he loved good books: history and science, as might be expected, but poetry and art and the more graceful forms of literature as well. The old writers satisfied his reason: the younger and later captivated his fancy. In his early life he showed the bent of his mind in his conduct, with other friends, of a literary gazette. In his maturer years, and after his retirement from practice at the bar, he was an active, interested, and always interesting member of a literary association, over which he presided with consummate ability and tact.

Thus he soothed and softened the asperities of public life by the quiet enjoyment of his well chosen library, and forgot the contests of the forum and the weariness of the court-room in the "still air of delightful studies," in happy converse with the wise and witty of all time. If he sometimes appeared stern, he was yet more often indulgent. But in all things he strove to be just. A love that was deep but not demonstrative tempered his life with its warmth of feeling, and moulded his character in forms of hidden beauty, which, if not readily discernible, were still no less real. A well equipped, a thoroughly furnished, a full rounded manhood, worthy of

being kept in long remembrance, and gratefully cherished by many generations to come, was thus the well matured fruit of his more than three score years and ten.

“A virtuous woman is the crown of her husband,” says the Hebrew sage, and “her price” is declared to be “above rubies.” The term was used as including those commendable qualities of womanhood which, in the early days, characterized the head of a household. I have spoken of Mrs. Fowler as sharing in the hopes and success of her husband. She also shared to the full in his public spirit and in his literary tastes and studies. She was an active member of that patriotic association of American women who saved Mount Vernon for the republic. She was ready with her generous help to promote the success of those benevolent organizations that seek the relief of poverty and old age. She was especially interested and effective in the measures that were adopted for the establishment, enlargement, and maintenance of this library. She knew and could fully appreciate good books. Her comments were always original and often brilliant.

From a girl Mrs. Fowler had shown capabilities of a no common order, and a versatility of thought and action which was simply marvellous. She could break a colt in the pasture, keep with accuracy her father’s accounts in his business, manage a household with a perfect knowledge of every detail, whether in drawing-room or in kitchen. With equal facil-



ity she could gratify a correct taste in drawing and music, and could read with a full intellectual comprehension a beautiful poem, or a profound treatise on philosophy or religion. As a cordial hospitality marked her social life and her intercourse with friends, so did she give welcome greeting to every new thought that bore credentials of value; and her love of good literature served to freshen and invigorate her spirit. Her womanhood thus had its gracious aspect and its graceful lines. When days of weariness and wasting sickness came, there were happy memories to brighten and cheer the waning life.

I have made prominent in these brief notices of Mr. and Mrs. Fowler their literary taste and their enjoyment of good books, because I wished to emphasize the appropriateness of this memorial of their lives. Surely, nothing can be better adapted to keep their memory green in the community in which they held so conspicuous a position. No fitter, no more lasting, monument could have been devised, no more important gift could have been bestowed upon this fair city. "The pyramids may forget their builders," says Lowell, on a similar occasion, "but such memorials as this have longer memories." Their history is written in the grateful remembrance of many generations. The sense of fitness in this memorial is made more apparent by the fact that Judge Fowler was one of a committee—of whom one member, the Hon. Sylvester Dana, alone sur-

vives—that reported at the town-meeting of 1852 the desirability of establishing a public library in Concord, and providing for its organization. Thus it may be said that he was one of the progenitors of the enterprise, for it was to his advocacy and his judicious counsel that the city is largely indebted for the library itself. The parent's design is consummated by the children's action to-day.

It is well to erect a statue upon the public square, to commemorate the statesmanship of a faithful servant of the commonwealth, or the valor of a loyal defender of the nation's life. The pulses of patriotic feeling are stirred by the sight of it, and the moral enthusiasm which the thought of self-devotion there embodied arouses is awakened in many a heart. We honor the gifted orator, the brave soldier, the public benefactor, in the granite, the marble, the bronze. It is especially well to establish institutions and houses of charity, and to commemorate in the hospital and the home for the helpless the names of their founders. The noiseless work of benevolence goes on, to breathe its blessing upon all surrounding life.

But these have sometimes but one story to tell. The library has its many voices, and speaks in many tongues, for it is the spirit that gives the utterance. Daily and hourly the lesson is taught, whether it be by biography or history, by science or art, by philosophy or religion, by books of adventure and travel, which open the unknown regions of the earth, or of

domestic life, which reveal the treasures of the heart, by those works of the imagination or fancy which in poetry and fiction disclose the beauty of common things, or the heroism which every-day life may witness,—the lesson is taught, that the manhood and womanhood that God has given to us are the most sacred, the most beautiful, the most potent, the most enduring, of all earthly things. The lesson also is taught, that, above all human life and all human endeavor, governing the one with a beneficent sway, and ennobling the other and making it fruitful to all good and great results, is the Divine power, combined with the Divine wisdom and love, which makes single lives prophetic and heroic; which leads on the advancing march of human civilization; which shines in sun and star, guides the planets and the systems of moving worlds, makes the laws of the universe like the “personal habits of Deity,” and gives to science the authority of revelation; which discloses the truth that human knowledge, love, thought, and hope are the reflections of its own surpassing glory; which sings in the poet’s song, reveals its beauty in the artist’s pencil, and shows how human imagination has a creative potency kindred with its own! Human literature thus becomes the record of human life in all its aspects, and tells, with equal fidelity, the story of Divine Providence, justifying the ways of God with man.

I am aware that, in speaking to you of the value of books, and of the unalloyed pleasure which a taste

for reading gives, I am saying nothing which is original or strange. The exercises of to-day signalize, not the establishment of a new library, but the removal of one, which already numbers its score and more of growing and useful years, to a new and more congenial home. The familiar volumes will look down upon you, in their new surroundings, with the same friendly greeting. The added convenience, not to say the unaccustomed luxury, of their habitation will only make them more cordial in their welcome. For books are friends whom prosperity does not elate. They never cut an acquaintance, when once it has been made, nor pass one by, however humble may be its character, with a supercilious consciousness of having risen in the world. They are almost the only friends that are free from the jealousy of others. They do not frown upon us when we neglect them, and they give a ready response, without an allusion to our former estrangement, whenever we see fit to make advances for a renewal of friendly intercourse. They are always genial and always generous.

“Conversation with books,” says Montaigne, “goes side by side with me in my whole course, and everywhere is assisting to me;—it comforts me in my age and solitude; it eases me of a troublesome weight of idleness, delivers me at all hours from company that I dislike, and blunts the point of griefs, if they are not extreme, and have not got an entire possession of my soul. To divert myself

from a troublesome fancy, 't is but to run to my books. They presently fix me to them, and drive the other out of my thoughts. They do not mutiny at seeing I have only recourse to them for want of other more real, natural, and lively conveniences. They always receive me with the same kindness."

The witty Frenchman is supplemented by the Italian poet. Petrarch says,—“I have friends whose society is extremely agreeable to me. They are of all ages and every country. It is easy to gain access to them, for they are always at my service. Some teach me how to live, others how to die. Some, by their vivacity, drive away my cares and exhilarate my spirits; while others give fortitude to my mind, and teach me the important lesson how to restrain my desires, and to depend wholly upon myself. In return for all their services, they only ask me to accommodate them with a convenient chamber in some corner of my humble habitation, where they may repose in peace: for these friends are more delighted by the tranquillity of retirement than with the tumults of society."

“Consider,” says Emerson, in full accord with the others, “what you have in the smallest chosen library. A company of the wisest and wittiest men that could be picked out of all civil countries in a thousand years have set in best order the results of their learning and wisdom. The men themselves were hid and inaccessible, solitary, impatient of interruption, fenced by etiquette; but the thought



which they did not uncover to their bosom friend is here written out in transparent words to us, the strangers of another age." But by this act, not of condescension, but of genuine good-will, do not the authors themselves offer to us their friendship? I, for one, should hesitate to force my company upon an eminent author uninvited. For I should become to him but little more than what Mr. Emerson used to call "a devastator of his time." There are people enough ready to spoil his day without my presence. But when he writes a book and publishes it to the world, he invites me to share his inmost intellectual life, and I gladly and gratefully accept the invitation. Then he becomes gracious and kind, and entertains me with a generous hospitality. Nay, he comes into my home as an honored guest, and his visits are those of a dear and valued friend.

In earlier days, as many of us doubtless remember, Dickens's works were published in monthly parts, and so successfully that the example was followed by other authors. I recall now,—as doubtless also some of yourselves,—the delight with which these monthly parts were received, with what joy they were anticipated, and with what real happiness they were read. It was almost like the coming of a lover across the sea. Wittingly or unwittingly, an author whom I admire writes to me, and for my enjoyment, even if he does not know how his book reaches my hands. Though I may be but one of many thousands, I am made to feel that I am treated

as well as the most honored guest. This is the advantage of the kind of society which books offer to us. No one can feel slighted by inattention. There are no wall flowers; and one can pass a delightful evening with the most courteous of hosts, for the shyest and most bashful are at once placed at ease, and receive as kind and polite a treatment as the most favored and intimate. There is no small advantage in this to the modest reader. For to feel the assurance that the best authors of the past or the present days are one's dear friends, is to become conscious of some noble possession. Life is dignified, and the passing years have a new character.

“All round the room my silent servants wait,  
My friends in every season, bright and dim;  
Angels and seraphim  
Come down and murmur to me sweet and low,  
And spirits of the skies all come and go,  
Early and late :  
From the old world's divine and distant date,  
From the sublimer few,  
Down to the poet, who but yester-eve  
Sang sweet and made us grieve—  
All come, assembling here in order due.”

There is sometimes a question, however, whether or not an author's real character can be ascertained by his writings. Does he speak to us from the centre of his being, or only from the outside? Perhaps a doubt of this kind may have been the motive

which induced a Western correspondent to write to Longfellow the curious request,—“ Please inform me whether or not your *feelings* were in sympathy with your immortal thought when you wrote ‘The Bridge.’ ” The man himself,—or, possibly, the woman,—seemed not to have any sense of the humor or the absurdity of the thing. Perhaps there was an honest purpose beneath it, and the subject suggested by it has been often discussed with a greater or less measure of wisdom.

There are some who contend,—and with a show of truth, we must admit,—that an author writes simply as he is moved by his peculiar genius at the time, and has no intention, as there is no pressing need, of letting the world know what manner of man he really is. If I should say that it is not every author that is consistent in his daily life with what he utters with his pen, he might retort upon me that it is not every preacher that practises what he preaches. But the *tu quoque* rejoinder never disposes of the subject. Undoubtedly, men of genius have their infirmities and faults, and it may be a somewhat ungenerous task to dwell upon them.

Perhaps the mild criticism which Emerson passed upon his friend, Bronson Alcott, may be accepted as an admirable statement of the case. Emerson admired his neighbor very much, but he was not blind to his weaknesses. He was “ obliged to confess that his friend could not deal with matters of fact.” “ He looks at everything,” says Emerson in his jour-



nal, "in larger angles than any other, and by good right would be the greatest man. But here comes in another trait: it is found that, though his angles are of so generous contents, the lines do not meet. The apex is not quite defined. We must allow for the refraction of the lens, but it is the best instrument I have ever met with."

We are sometimes provoked into unfavorable criticism when we discover, through the perhaps too conscientious faithfulness of the biographer, some glaring fault in one whose writings have commanded our warm admiration. But, as Mr. Emerson says, "we must allow for the refraction of the lens." If we have to separate the man from the author, we still can enjoy the fruits of his genius. If Goldsmith and Leigh Hunt were careless about paying their debts, and Bulwer quarrelled with his wife, and Dickens found, after many years of domestic intercourse, that the mother of his children was "incompatible," and Carlyle was "a gey man to live with," and Shelley went off with Mary Goodwin, and George Eliot lived with a man who was not her husband in the eye of the law, and Byron was the victim of many vices, we still can appreciate the excellence of their literary work. Scott may have had a pardonable vanity to found a family and build a house which should become historic; but what a wholesome, healthy, even héroic man he was! Wordsworth may have been at times too self-conscious in his simplicity; but no one among modern

bards has opened up the depths like him, and so disclosed the

“——sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.”

Coleridge may have clouded both his mental and moral sense with the fumes of opium; and Lamb, gentle, lovable, and rare in his self-devotion, may have occasionally indulged in cups that both inebriate and cheer,—but I would by no means on that account banish them from my shelves. Burns might now and then fall a prey to both appetite and passion; nevertheless his song sometimes rises sweet and full of melody as a lark's, and pours down from aloft its rich music to entrance all that hear. We must judge these friends of ours—as we would also judge one another—at their best; and if we cannot altogether overlook their faults, we will not certainly depreciate or disparage their virtues. Integrity of manhood and womanhood is a rare quality, and when we find it, we will evermore be grateful for it, and thank God that He has sent into the world singers whose notes come pure and clear from depths of purity within their own being—writers whose words stir our hearts to noble emotions and devout aspirations—authors whose books have in them the ele-

ments of immortality, because they illustrate what is most generous and most worthy of the human soul. Every book that is written by a true man or woman has something in it of the best quality of its author, and so may become immortal. We may even sometimes be disposed to believe, with Hawthorne, that "every new book, or antique one, may contain the 'Open Sesame!'"—the spell to disclose treasures hidden in some unsuspected cave of truth."

Happily, with the best of American authors there is no need to make exceptions. Irving, Cooper, Dana, Bryant, Prescott, Longfellow, Motley, Emerson, Hawthorne, Whittier, Lowell, Holmes, are never to be mentioned with bated breath. We read their biographies and trace their careers with admiration, and are glad to find, both in themselves and in their books, all that is charming and attractive. They are generous and pure, amiable both at home and abroad, pursuing life and performing its duties with a manly simplicity worthy of all praise. It certainly is honorable to the character, both of our literature and our literary men, that we can thus speak and feel. If yet there be an occasional deviation—for we do not seek

"A faultless monster which the world ne'er saw"—

we still would evermore rejoice in our knowledge of those who, with ourselves, have known of the struggles and strivings and infirmities of our mortal life,

and can sympathize with us in our failures as well as in our successes.

The victories that have been won for us on the field of our national literature are for the glory of our national life. Military exploits may for a time engage the popular attention, but literary achievements are all for time, and command a grateful commemoration when the beating of the drum, and the blare of the trumpets, and the roar of the cannon have died away to silence. The sneering question of the English critic, "Who reads an American book?" has been fully answered; and now both the book and the author are held in well deserved esteem.

In all departments of literature, American writers have won an honored place. In biography, history, philosophy, art, adventures, science, fiction, poetry, religion, we can find authors at whose feet we gladly sit, and to whose books we gladly give the place of honor. We need look no longer to the old world for our models. We are freed from our subservience to foreign conventionality and our fear of foreign criticism. An American library, as it seems to me, should especially favor American literature; and when we once have ascertained the wealth we have at our command and already in our hands, we shall feel a wonderful content in counting over our treasures. It is true, that genius can call any country its own, and is not limited by any boundary lines. It is not entered at the custom-house, and cannot be

excluded by any anti-Chinese law. It is cosmopolitan and universal. Yet we are especially gratified when we can claim as fellow-countrymen, American by birth and nature and character, the men of genius who bid fair to make illustrious this, our own province, in the world-wide republic of letters.

As there are different classes of books, so there are different classes of readers. "Some books are to be tasted," says Lord Bacon, "others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested;—that is, some books are to be read only in parts, others to be read but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly and with diligence and attention." There are corresponding kinds of readers—those who taste, and taste to criticize; those who swallow, and are but little better for what they have taken; and those who study carefully and diligently, that they may not only amass a wealth of learning, but also make it effective by assimilation, and fruitful by its wise employment in human concerns.

There are, also, different methods of reading. Some read every word, and one word at a time; others read a sentence or a paragraph at a glance; and I have even known of one or two who seem to have the faculty of seeing the contents of an entire page by simply looking up and down its lines. Some persons also have a remarkable power of memory, and they can tell, even after the lapse of years, the precise page in a book where a certain specified subject is considered, and even the line upon the page.



I have known a lawyer who could give, without a moment's hesitation, the exact reference to a case as reported, without having seen the book in which it appeared for a considerable period of time. It was not only in law that he was thus versed, but there was also no single branch of literature with which he was not more or less familiar.

Such persons are omnivorous readers, and nothing comes amiss. But most of us must be careful in our selections; and as we are debarred by one cause or another—the lack of time or the want of opportunity—from such indulgence of the intellectual appetite, we have to exercise our judgment as best we can in making our choice. We certainly would be grateful for all books of reference prepared by those who are competent to make original investigations. The historian and the philosopher help us greatly, and the poet and the novelist bring in upon the dull routine of duty the light of imagination to brighten the daily task.

Some people—writers of note and ability—have recently amused themselves by giving lists of what they thought the best hundred books for the general reader. The results are curious, and of sufficient variety, as showing the differences in judgment to be noticed in men of wide reading and extensive learning. But can any one really select reading which will commend itself to all alike? There are a few standard books which every one must read, who wishes, as Dr. Johnson suggests, to enjoy life or

to endure it." And there are the Bible and Shakespeare, which are a library in themselves when rightly understood. It is certainly a most felicitous arrangement here to set apart a room for the especial study of Shakespeare.

But beyond these there is such a diversity of tastes as to make it extremely difficult to say what one shall read, and what one shall omit. Hamerton says,—“The art of reading is to skip judiciously. Whole libraries may be skipped in these days, when we have the results of them in our modern culture without going over the ground again. And even of the books we decide to read there are almost always large portions which do not concern us, and which we are sure to forget the day after we have read them. The art is to skip all that does not concern us, whilst missing nothing that we really need.” Emerson gives these practical rules: “(1) Never read any book that is not a year old. (2) Never read any but famed books. (3) Never read any but what you like.” Dr. Johnson once said,—“A man ought to read just as inclination leads him, for what he reads as a task will do him little good. A young man should read five hours in the day, and so may acquire a great deal of knowledge.” Shakespeare’s Tranio tells his master that

“No profit grows where is no pleasure ta’en;  
In brief, sir, study what you most affect.”

Mr. Darwin turned aside from his laborious applica-

tion of mind in scientific studies to enjoy his novel, although he could not read poetry with any interest. "Novels," he said, "have been for years a wonderful relief and pleasure to me, and I often bless all novelists." Yet novels and novelists are to some good men objects to be shunned, and there are those who think an indulgence in fiction but little better than "intellectual dram-drinking." But there are novels, and novels. To read Scott appreciatively is to come in contact with a great and generous soul; and to read Thackeray is to look into the deep things of life.

"I have often been astonished," says Sir John Lubbock, "how little care people devote to the selection of what they read. Books are almost innumerable; our hours for reading are, alas! very few. Yet many people read almost by hazard. They will take any book they chance to find in a room at a friend's house; they will buy a novel at a railway stall, if it has an attractive title. Indeed, I believe even the binding, in some cases, affects their choice. The selection is, no doubt, far from easy. I have, indeed, sometimes heard it said, that in reading every one must choose for himself,—but this reminds me of the recommendation not to go into the water until you can swim." On the other hand, a plea is put in by the late Lord Iddlesleigh for desultory reading, as it may often happen that a casual sentence or two dropped into the mind, here and there, and at an odd moment, may become



the fruitful seed of profitable thought. Thus do men of eminence in intellectual things differ in their opinion; and one of modest pretensions may well shrink from deciding the question. Of one thing I believe we are all reasonably sure: it is injurious, both mentally and morally, to fritter away one's time in reading without any definite purpose, and thus to indulge in intellectual dissipation.

There is, in short, reading for instruction, and there is reading for diversion. There are books to stimulate, to encourage, to arouse our noblest emotions and thoughts. There are books to widen the horizon of our minds and our lives, as they open to our minds the broad fields of knowledge which have been cultivated for centuries. There are books which soothe and rest and comfort our souls when wearied with the struggles and the toil of life. There are books which amuse, delight, and captivate us, when we need to turn away from severe study and exhausting labor. There are books which reveal to us the beauty that lies around our feet in this world of ours; the grandeur of this life which God has given us, in which to serve His truth, promote His glory, and make His kingdom real; and the immortal hope which brightens the earthly course of man, and outlives death and the grave.

A library like this furnishes food, nourishment, entertainment, inspiration for all, and its catalogue ranges readily

“From grave to gay, from lively to severe.”

Here, indeed, all tastes will find the opportunity of gratification. Here young and old will have congenial company and an agreeable resort. Here the finest and bravest souls will mingle their best thoughts with the life of every day for its ennoblement and consecration. Here the wit and wisdom of the ages will have their home, and give their cordial salutation to all lovers of good letters, of whatever condition in life. How happy the thought which has thus found unique and generous expression in this beautiful and spacious monument of filial devotion, this enduring memorial of public virtue and parental love! May it stand unimpaired through the years to come, to fulfil its mission to this community in enlightening the mind, in cultivating pure tastes, in enhancing the enjoyment of elevated pleasures, in stimulating the growth of character, in strengthening all noble motives and dignifying all familiar life!

After the beautiful rendering, by the choir, of the anthem, "To Thee, O Country," the Mayor introduced Mrs. ABBA GOOLD WOOLSON, of Boston, Massachusetts, formerly of Concord, who read the following

## POEM.

A little, brave New England town  
They built in early days,  
When they had cut the forest down,  
And cleared the grassy ways.  
In seemly order, side by side,  
The buildings rose in modest pride,  
With drooping garden-boughs between,  
And trellised vines, and plots of green ;  
Each hearthstone laid for household cheer  
And sober feasts throughout the year.

Outside their homes, in earnest mood,  
They labored for the common good ;  
They made their highways straight and broad,  
And trees transplanted from the wood,  
To shade the springing sod.  
A council hall for stern debate  
On matters that concerned the state,  
And many schools and churches, stood  
To make men wise, and keep them good.

And so, intent on grave affairs,  
With honest toil,  
They gave themselves to daily cares,  
And turned the stubborn soil.  
Wealth was not there to flaunt her power,  
Nor poverty in dens to cower ;  
But all like helpful brothers dwelt,  
Together worked, together knelt,—  
With little time to waste in mirth ;  
Mindful of heaven, but more of earth.

In time there came, to claim a home,  
A pilgrim-group, of foreign mien,—  
Like straggling gipsy bands that roam  
By village lanes and meadows green ;  
Born under other skies than ours,—  
A land of song, and sun, and flowers.  
In gait and speech and flashing eye,  
With gracious look, and bearing high,  
They seemed to speak of far-off climes,  
Of southern lands, and elder times.

They gave a greeting, as they came,  
And told their names with conscious pride,  
As though with noble blood allied,  
And not unknown to fame.  
Learning, in mantle frayed and brown,  
Upon an open page looked down,  
Nor raised for once her eyes :  
Then grave Philosophy, intent,  
Who scarcely saw which way she went,  
Off-looking to the skies :  
And Science, young, with sturdy pace  
Advancing, bold and free,  
Looked neither off to empty space  
Nor dropped his gaze to see  
The storied page which Learning read,—  
So rapt she did not hear his tread.  
He spoke not with the sauntering band,  
But kept aloof, the while he scanned  
—Upheld within his steady hand—  
The pebble flecked with mosses brown,  
The leaflet from the wayside tree ;

And bent his brows with haughty frown  
If they, his elders, crossed his path ;  
Nor strove to hide his scornful wrath  
At sight of Poesy.

For he, the tricky, venturous child,  
With eyes in-looking, deep and wild,  
Danced here and there, a wayward elf,  
Humming his carols to himself ;

But turning back anon,  
Ere far his steps had gone,  
With sudden start, and hurried stride,  
To cling his comrade's skirts beside ;  
Nestling his hand within their own,  
As loath to find himself alone.

No money had they in their purse :

Footsore they came.

They neither hammered, delved, nor spun,  
Nor boasted aught that they had done ;  
Nor did they fear a stranger's curse ;

Or hold it cause for shame  
To beg for shelter, food, and fire,  
Enough to stay their life's desire.

The boon was asked with careless grace,  
As who should say, " Another place  
Awaits us, but we deign to stay,  
Since here we halted on the way.  
Vouchsafe the paltry gifts we need,  
And you shall find us friends indeed :  
If forth we go, to wander free,  
You are the poorer then, not we."

The citizens, for very shame,  
At mention of each sounding name,  
Forbore the vagrant band to chide :  
They gave them liberty to take  
The roof another's needs forsake,  
And there in peace to bide ;  
To grasp whatever fruits might be  
Unplucked by honest industry ;  
To seek the shade when days were warm,  
And house themselves from wind and storm.

And so to any roof they went,  
Which plenty spared and sufferance lent :  
And each so well his part did bear,  
Contented with his meagre share,  
That soon the town with truth confessed  
It ne'er had held a worthier guest.

But Poesy, when others stood  
Snatching betimes their scanty food,  
Was roaming far and wide ;  
Pulling the wild-rose from the ledge,  
Or asters from the wayside hedge,  
And lingering in the wood,  
To weave a garland for his head ;  
By many a passing fancy led  
To pond and river-side,  
Watching the sunset's purple state,  
Till home was reached, alas, too late.  
Oft went he supperless to bed,  
Blowing his finger-tips for cold,—  
To rise at night, when all was still,



And play upon his reedy flute  
—Left all the day unblown and mute—  
Such rapturous airs, so sweet, so bold,  
High floating over vale and hill,  
That all who heard them in their sleep  
Saw visions which the angels keep  
For weary mortals, who would fain  
Some glimpse of Paradise obtain :  
Then back to chilly bed he crept,  
And soon, with tired eyelids, slept.  
Nor did he deem his lot unblest,  
Since tender fancies warmed his breast,  
And music wafted to the wind  
His woes, and left content behind.  
But ere he slept, the pitying Muse  
Fed her dear child with honeyed dews,  
Gathered where sparkling waters shine,  
With sweet ambrosia, food divine.

They held such converse, deep and high,  
This stranger band, as years went by,  
That friends they won among the few ;  
Who saw fresh glories in the sky,  
And subtler meanings drew  
From changing aspects of the field,—  
The viewless crops their furrows yield ;  
Ungarnered, till at length they find  
A storehouse in the thinker's mind.  
A joy serene was taught to age,  
Who learned to con the studious page,  
To ponder with a deeper glance  
Each passing deed and circumstance :

And sometimes to their halls would stray  
Young men and maids, from idle play.

In time, these wondering pilgrims came  
To brighten homes of generous aim,  
    Responsive to some high behest :  
And honored thus throughout the year,  
In days of leisure, hours of cheer,  
    There grew in many a youthful breast  
    A liking for each gentle guest ;  
Till finer manners, nobler thought,  
A grace and culture, thus were taught.

One home, whose portals open flew  
    Whene'er these pilgrims came,  
Whose honored seats the master drew  
    Beside the hearth's bright flame,  
Sent forth to other homes the ray  
Whose light still broadens unto day.  
There Learning, Truth, Philosophy,  
    A cordial greeting found,  
With converse flowing free ;  
The pulse to quicker life was stirred,  
Thought flashed, and flew the wingèd word :  
    And deep discourse went round.

Alas ! for us the fires no longer glow  
    Upon that hearthstone ; friendship's joy is fled :  
Swift to salute us comes no welcoming voice,  
    No hastening footsteps with the well known tread.  
At eve no more do favored loiterers sit,  
    By love detained, around the shining board,

While queenly mistress, 'mid the play of wit,  
Rules the bright feast, and adds the trenchant word.  
The tones are hushed that bade our hearts rejoice,  
The shafts of wit are sped ;  
And strangers o'er the threshold come and go,  
Nor heed, nor know  
Where linger mute reminders of the dead.

Trained in that household, which fond memory sees  
As erst the happy home of lettered ease,  
Two almoners extend a willing hand  
To bless for aye the pilgrim band.  
They bid their feet no longer roam,  
But here to find a lasting home ;—  
One free to all ; since none may stay  
The flood where minds their thirst would slake.  
The power that should exclusion make,  
And raise a bar to keep away  
The poorest lad from Learning's shelf,—  
To youthful Burns and Shakespeare say,  
“ No boys with neither friends nor pelf  
Have entrance here ; the books are ours,”  
Would dwarf a soul's commanding powers,  
Would rob the world, and rob itself.

To sire and matron long revered  
This fitting monument is reared ;  
And brighter filial love shall shine  
When burning here on Learning's shrine.  
Brother and sister, side by side,  
Have come to ope the portals wide :  
They greet the wanderers,—now no more  
Stray exiles on a friendless shore.

We see them pass, and give them cheer,  
These pilgrims loved for many a year.  
Who shall not honor them, who sees  
Their stately dwelling 'mid the trees?

Ah ! Learning, Truth, and Poesy,  
You now are hosts, the guests are we !  
Well may you turn to bless the hands  
Which give such largess from their store ;  
His soul, which all your dower expands,  
Can tender you no more,  
Than when he plans with patient care,  
Your home within this temple fair.  
For her, so loved,—we know her well ;  
The half nor you nor I may tell ;  
To me a pleasure, her a pain,  
To voice the praise our hearts contain ;  
I sometimes think, when her I find  
So gay and brave, so true and kind,  
'Tis Rosalind herself again  
Come back to solace mortal men.

And now, in turn, the pilgrims shall dispense,  
From this their treasure-house of garnered thought,  
A priceless bounty,—till their guests are brought  
To hold communion with the minds of yore ;  
To soar beyond the narrow bounds of sense,  
And realms of hidden knowledge to explore :  
No longer prisoned in the passing hour,  
They move where time and space have lost their power.

These laden shelves, with their historic lore,  
Transport you to the empires of the dead :

Spread the wide page, and you shall hear no more  
The echoing street without, the hurried tread  
And throbbing life of this our modern land :  
The rolling centuries are backward whirled :  
Beneath the gateway of the Past you stand,  
And glide into the morning of the world.

For you the cities of the East again  
Their busy throngs recall ;  
You see their reapers bending o'er the plain,  
Their masons on the wall ;  
And cruel armies issue from the gate  
To smite some trembling land ;  
Or, home-turned, with victory elate,  
They lead a dusty band  
Of lowing oxen, weary prisoners bound,  
No more to wander free,  
Sad-faced, while jeering thousands press around,  
Shouting anew to see  
'Mid standards thronging high, and banners torn,  
The gleaming spoil of palaces upborne.

Whirled onward in the crowd's exultant tide,  
Rushing with eager pride,  
You mount with them the lofty palace floor,  
To pause, awe-struck, beside the presence-door,  
Where tower, in stony calm, with lifted wings,  
The mighty shapes of dread Assyrian kings :  
Then entering, undismayed,  
While war's strange trophies at his feet are laid,  
And shields are clashed, and piercing trumpets blown,  
You prostrate fall before great Sargon's throne.

Or, in the river-plain, amid the bloom  
Of Babylon's low gardens, you shall stray,  
While evening's gathering stillness lulls each sound,  
Save that of dashing waters far away,  
And mournful winds that through the willows play :  
When festal lights no longer break the gloom,  
There in the hush profound,  
From dungeons underground,  
As near the palace walls your footsteps roam,  
You start surprised to hear,  
Unseen, and yet so near,  
The sobbing captives, where, in fetters bound,  
Jerusalem's sad princes dream of home.

Would you escape to happier scenes than this?  
You then shall tread where proud Persepolis  
Rears in the vale her lofty, pillared halls ;  
Walk through her spacious courts, when lightly falls  
And lifts the silken curtain in the breeze,  
Revealing blooming vistas, where the trees  
Tremble at dusk with song of nightingales,—  
Ere from the horizon sails  
The full-orbed moon, to brighten all the sky,  
Riding supreme on high.  
There at the noontide, slumberous with the heat,  
The charmed beholder sees  
In clustered ranks the roses red and sweet,  
And diamond-dust from swaying fountains blown  
O'er glowing turf and rim of sculptured stone.

And now a sailor, speeding home again  
To Athens o'er the main,



You swiftly pass the shining Cyclades,  
Set in their foamy seas ;  
    And standing at the prow,  
When leaps the bounding skiff to every wave,  
    You face the flying spray, and shade your brow,  
Eager one glimpse to save  
Which sends assurance to your straining sight  
That still the snowy temples crown the height :  
And shout for joy, when o'er the billow's crest,  
    First glimmers from afar,—  
Ere rocky coast-line darkens on the West,—  
    The twinkling splendor, like a drowning star,  
Which shows where mighty Pallas lifts on high  
Her flashing spear against the azure sky.

O'er Gibbon's stately page you linger then,—  
    And pass Rome's prouder day,  
To mark, recorded by his faithful pen,  
    The waning strength of her imperial sway.  
No victor's hour her splendors shall restore ;  
The haughty legions can return no more  
Along her highways ; but a savage horde,  
Bearing to southern lands the conqueror's sword,  
    In vengeance issue forth  
    From forests of the north,  
And sweep where Cæsar's armies trod of yore.  
Onward they pour defiant, trampling down  
The waving field, the terror-stricken town,  
Till art and culture from their seats are hurled,  
And havoc wastes the Mistress of the World.

The centuries pass : and arts, revived once more,  
Teach the dark world what they had taught before,

Kindling anew on Learning's blackened shrine,  
From ancient fires, the saving spark divine.  
Then states and kingdoms, springing side by side,  
Fan the bright flame ;—a brotherhood allied,  
By sweet civility and Christian laws,  
To foster Learning as a sacred cause.

Such tales these volumes tell,—  
How nations rose and fell,  
What virtues strengthen, and what crimes destroy ;  
And, by such lessons taught, the thoughtful boy  
Will come to see how tyranny and wrong  
Can rear no firm dominion, mild and strong.  
Then shall he cherish in a patriot's breast  
Love for this land, the youngest and the best,  
Which builds her power on blessings that endure,  
On freedom, won alike for rich and poor,  
Seeks peace and plenty, turns from wasting war,  
Yet grasps the sword to save a righteous law.

Perchance from elder times you haste away  
To see what pictures greet the eye to-day.  
Forth with the traveller you lightly pace  
Through distant realms, on Fancy's flying feet,  
Scaling all heights, a rover free and bold ;  
The while you keep your place  
Beside the hearthstone, housed from wind and cold.  
Your eye, intent upon the printed sheet,  
Shall foreign lands and hidden deeps explore ;  
You gaze where billows beat,  
Blue as of old, round Pæstum's templed shore ;

And note, 'twixt crumbling pillars reared on high,  
The wind-rocked flower, awave against the sky.  
You climb steep pathways, dark with mountain  
    gloom ;  
Or tread the moorland, sweet with purple bloom ;  
Or move with exiled bands, that sadly roam  
Toward frozen steppes, despoiled of friends and  
    home ;  
Or breast with wheeling birds the welcome breeze  
    That sweeps the Afric coast,  
Bringing cool draughts from wide Atlantic seas  
    To shake a rustling host  
Of swinging boughs, and tufted, verdurous plumes ;  
Where, in a garden lone,  
    Terraced adown the slope,  
Geranium thickets toss their scarlet blooms,  
    And Moorish casements ope  
Fronting the wave, with every curtain blown,  
And wind and morning make the spot their own.  
Or, pleasure-led, upon a brimming tide,  
Float where the Danube rolls its flood beside  
The empty halls of Presburg's ruined pile ;  
See bright Valencia's orange orchards smile ;  
And watch the sunset glow  
Fade from Granada's mountain-wall of snow :  
    Or scan the shadowed steep  
Of glad Sorrento, if, engulfed below,  
Where green the waters glide  
    O'er toppled wall and villa sunken deep,  
Haply a slanting beam may chance to show  
The home of Tasso, whelmed within the tide.  
Such journeys swift, such devious flight, he tries  
Who looks at Nature through the traveller's eyes.

Revolving suns to other lands shall bring  
Decay and darkness to succeed the Spring ;  
But neither blight nor Winter's chill may come  
Where art and letters have their sheltered home.  
Here bloom perennial lingers in the vales ;  
The airs are soft ; the sunlight never pales.  
Whatever blasts may sweep the western hill,  
In Chaucer's verse the dew-drops sparkle still ;  
The turf springs fresh and cool ; the daisies glow,  
Though planted there five hundred years ago.  
From Herrick's garden fade the daffodils,  
And, fading, bloom for aye ; with fragrance thrills  
Our wondering sense when we behold once more  
The lovely rose which Saccharissa wore :  
Still steps the courtier down the shaded walk,  
Plucking its fairest blossom from the stalk,  
To add a beauty to the dainty line  
That tells his lady she is all divine.  
Grave Wordsworth leads us forth to lonely lakes  
Whose placid depth the mountain shadow takes.  
With Keats we tread where summer splendors throng,  
And Shelley's skylark floods the air with song.

Though science flout and ignorance deride,  
Imagination shall her sway retain ;  
Here Poesy will sit by Shakespeare's side,  
Spirit and Master, in their own domain ;  
And that great soul who in his wisdom knew,  
As never man before, how nobly true,  
Tender, and loyal, womanhood might be,—  
Most truly gentle when most brave and free,—  
This poet's heart, that felt the subtle power  
Of grace and beauty, wit, and smiling youth,

Yet turned from all, in manhood's later hour,  
To greet plain constancy and simple truth,—  
The bard supreme, to woman's heart endeared,  
Shall have within these walls his lasting shrine,  
By gratitude and fond allegiance reared,  
A tribute rendered to his gifts divine.

And o'er the threshold, seeking here to know  
The hidden import of his every phrase,  
All day, with reverent step, shall come and go  
The maids and matrons, uttering still his praise ;  
Finding no word that courteous lips may speak,  
No gallant deed, but seemeth cold and weak  
Beside the glowing portraits that he drew  
Of those pure souls his loving fancy knew.

And when the night has closed these swinging doors,  
And home and revel call the throng away,  
With silent step, across the vacant floors,  
A troop of shadowy figures seem to stray ;  
Their floating garments brighten in the gloom,  
When sails the rising moon o'er elm and birch,  
Sending its beams within the darkened room,  
Betwixt the towers of the Norman church,—  
Built like Matilda's abbey, far away.  
What wonder that the eye of fancy sees  
In such an hour, such sacred haunts as these,  
The gentle sisterhood of Shakespeare's line,  
Step from their nooks to bow before his shrine?  
Faithful Cordelia,—honor dwells with her ;  
Portia the wise, and Rosalind's sweet grace,  
Hiding love's rankling wound with laughing face ;  
Gay, sparkling Beatrice, and Perdita,



And winsome Imogen, and all the race  
Of noble wives and most unhappy queens,—  
Poor Constance, wild with wrongs ; and Katherine,  
Whose sturdy pride on simple justice leans ;  
And she who, scoffing, dared her Love to win  
Through crime a kingly crown ; and then apart,  
Sparing his troubled sight what conscience sent  
To haunt her pillow, paced with shuddering breath,  
Wringing her snow-white hands.  
And Anjou's Margaret, of lion-heart,  
Defying fate, till, every arrow spent  
And high hope shattered, in her father's lands  
She sat, a listless exile, waiting death.  
The world has wept with them since Prospero  
Summoned their spirits from the vasty deep  
To tell what griefs the human heart can know,  
What bitter woes in royal tombs may sleep.

Full many a sorrow added to its own,  
And many a joy, the scholar's heart has known,  
Seeking for knowledge in the world of books.  
How cold and dead, to outward vision, looks  
The volume known to fame !  
Yet smouldering fire and blasts of quickening strength  
Wait in its pages, leaping forth at length  
To touch the soul responsive to its flame.

And if, in future years, some idling youth,  
For whom the shop, the anvil, and the plow  
Have no enticing call,—if such as he,  
Startled by words of truth  
Within these alcoves slumbering even now,



Shall find at last his prisoned soul set free,  
His heart no longer mute,  
And striking then the poet's quivering lute,  
Awaken melodies of wondrous power,  
Unheard till that glad hour ;  
And, in immortal verse,  
Which years to come and nations shall rehearse  
—So sweet the matchless strains—  
Picture for aye these level intervalles,  
The sandy, pine-dark plains,  
The palisaded bluffs, the impetuous stream,  
The granite ledges, and the chestnut woods,  
With charm that never fails :  
Or, in impassioned dream,  
Which takes no note of nature's solitudes,  
Reveal the spirit's moods,—  
The same in every age and every clime ;  
Voice the keen agony that Sorrow knows  
When fates, relentless, deal their cruel blows :  
Sing of Love's flame, and Hope's bright rhapsody,  
And soaring Faith sublime ;  
To minds untaught a quicker life impart,  
From ignorance set free ;  
With trust in Heaven sustain the sinking heart ;  
Teach wealth with poverty its goods to share ;  
For scorn, send pity ; courage, for despair ;  
Till the brave carol dry the sufferer's tear,  
The friendless toiler cheer,  
And, sweeping on with accent deep and strong,  
Arouse the world to lessen human wrong,—  
If this the poet's mission, this his song,  
Who will not deem the voice divinely given,  
A seraph pleading from the courts of heaven?

When such a singer, from some humble home,  
In happy years to come,  
A spell of genius o'er the land shall cast,  
And crown the city with his splendid fame,  
His townsmen, reckoning sordid gain and loss,  
And hoarded stores of generations past,  
May prize their wealth, but count it all as dross  
Matched with the proud possession of his name.

And should no honor come, nor wealth, nor power,  
The while he lives,

He will not lack his life's sufficient dower,  
The cheer which comfort gives.

Nature shall solace him with beauty, born  
His finer sense to feed ;

The clouds his chariot, and the wind of morn  
His coursing steed.

And when he pines for converse sweet and high,  
Unrecognized, forlorn,

Apollo's self, descending from the sky,  
Shall lead him on

To join the Muses where they sit and sing,  
A happy band, by Helicon's clear spring.

But if no kingly bard, from heaven sent,

With glimmering beauty deck the common fields,  
Forth from these walls, with influence unspent,

Shall flow the blessed power which knowledge wields ;  
The sweet humanities can never roam

To leave your borders ; agencies divine,  
In lonely farm-house and in city home,

These books will prove, to gladden and refine.  
And loftier purpose shall their pages preach,

Luring mankind to live a braver life :

A true philanthropy these halls will teach,  
Calling our youth from wealth's ignoble strife,  
And saying,—Fortune is a sacred trust :  
Use it to make men wise, and merciful, and just.

Then men shall see that all the outward realm,  
Whose charms material our senses hold,  
Is but the shadow, lustreless and cold ;  
That thought, and spirit, and the soul's ideal  
Are life's strong pilots, sitting at the helm,  
Bearing us on, through Error's passing shows,  
To what alone is absolute and real,—  
The final verities which Heaven knows.

After the applause called forth by the poem,  
WILLIAM P. FOWLER, Esq., of Boston, presented the  
Deed of Gift to the Trustees in these words :

It is with feelings of sincere pleasure, not unmixed with sad recollections, that in behalf of my sister and myself I make the formal presentation of this building to the City of Concord for the use of the Public Library. Our purpose in purchasing this estate and remodelling the house into a library building was twofold. We wished to erect a lasting memorial of our parents in the city of their residence, thus expressing our love for them and our gratitude for their abounding love and care, and their great generosity to us. Their earnest efforts in behalf of the educational and literary advancement of their fellow-citizens were marked features of their lives, and ren-

der it especially fitting that their memorial should continue their influence for good upon the intellectual life of the city for all time. Nothing is so sure to promote mental growth as contact with other and greater minds; and a library is the congregation of the master minds of all ages. The public library, in the establishment of which both our parents participated, is now to be housed in a permanent and accessible building, thus perpetuating their memory, and prolonging their interest in the well-being of Concord.

The second motive which has influenced us to make this gift is the desire that our native city should possess every possible stimulus to literary culture. We are glad to learn that love of books and fondness for critical study are already potent factors in the city's life. We gratefully acknowledge our own youthful advantages in the use of books, and would gladly extend those privileges to others as far as possible. We wish to secure a proper environment for the students of your valuable library; to enhance that library's usefulness by giving it an appropriate home and attractive surroundings; to bring every citizen within the circle of its influence; to reach the young and old alike,—the great body of non-readers as well as the better educated.

We have set apart a room for a museum, in the hope that a collection will be made there of such relics of the city's history, its great men and great events, as will create a lively interest in the city's past, and a

patriotic pride in her fame. We hope, too, that a collection of paintings and sculpture may in time be added. Concord people travel much over land and sea, and may well bring back with them articles of beauty or curiosity, to attract and edify visitors to the museum room.

We have also devoted a room to the accommodation of the numerous Shakespeare clubs of Concord, feeling sure that a local habitation will tend to prolong their useful existence. May this room help to perpetuate here the present remarkable and commendable interest in the works of the greatest of English poets.

The provisions of the deed of gift are designed to broaden the benefits to be derived from the library to the greatest possible extent. Their great object is to create a public interest in the library, and a popular use of its resources. It should be thronged each day with citizens anxious to obtain that daily bread of culture which is the staff of intellectual life. We trust that every citizen will regularly use this library in some way, either by passing an hour in the reading-room, or by taking home a book from its shelves. They are your books. This is your house, your literary home, to come and go, and sit and read in, at your pleasure. That is the spirit of possession, of ownership, in which we would have you view this library building. May it prove a veritable fountain of learning, whose waters shall be a living spring of knowledge and an inspiration to lofty effort.



The Hon. WILLIAM L. FOSTER, on behalf of the Trustees, responded as follows:

In the name and in behalf of the City of Concord, and of all the men and women and children thereof, for them and for future generations, the Trustees of the Public Library accept, with grateful thanks, this generous and beautiful gift.

The means heretofore provided by municipal appropriation, aided by the bounty of two or three individuals, gratefully remembered, have been not merely inconvenient and unattractive, but also much too limited in space to serve the constant and rapidly increasing public demand. We have at present a circulating library of about eight thousand volumes, besides some five thousand books and pamphlets retained for reference within the library rooms.

The number of our citizens who have availed themselves of the advantages of our circulating books has recently increased with great rapidity. In the year 1885 there were distributed 28,409 volumes; in 1886, 35,527; in 1887, 42,339; and in the year ending Aug. 31, 1888, 46,112. During the week ending last Saturday, 1,216 books were distributed. Manifestly we have become a reading people.

In the various departments, whether in works of history, biography, science, art, religion, politics, poetry, or fiction, the city's trustees have endeavored to provide a wholesome literature.

Heretofore no reading-room has been connected



with the library. Your munificence has supplied this important deficiency. We hope to be able to furnish the reading-room with the best and most useful current newspapers and other periodicals, domestic and foreign.

By the gift of this elegant and commodious building, with abundant shelf capacity for some twenty-five thousand volumes, with a spacious and convenient reading-room, and another delightful apartment designed for the use of literary clubs, you have furnished us not only ample facilities for the enjoyment of our present possessions, but also larger and better means for the general diffusion of knowledge among all our people.

Popular enlightenment and education are attained through three main agencies—the church, the public school, and a free library; and probably it will not be universally conceded that a free library is the least of these in beneficent power and effect.

Sir Francis Bacon, you remember, spoke of the wisdom that comes from History, the wit that is born of Poetry, and the power and force developed by Logic and Rhetoric; and he remarked that “reading maketh a full man.”

In his first message to congress, Washington told his countrymen,—“There is nothing which can better deserve your patronage than the promotion of science and literature. Knowledge, in every country, is the surest basis of public happiness;” and in his farewell message, he charged the people to “pro-

mote, as a matter of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge."

And General Grant, in a message to congress, exclaimed,—“I call upon the people, everywhere, to see to it that all who possess and exercise political rights shall have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge which will make their share in the government a blessing and not a danger.”

President Garfield also spoke of the “savory influence of universal education.”

Similar sentiments were expressed by the framers of our state constitution, who declared in that document that “Knowledge and learning generally diffused through a community being essential to a free government, and spreading the opportunities and advantages of education through the various parts of the country being highly conducive to promote this end, it shall be the duty of all legislators and magistrates, in all future periods of this government, to cherish the interest of literature and the sciences;” and accordingly our legislature, in 1849, enacted a statute authorizing towns and cities to raise money to procure books, maps, charts, periodicals, and other publications, for the establishment and perpetual maintenance of libraries “open to the free use of every inhabitant of the town [or city] where the same exists, for the general diffusion of intelligence among all classes of the community,” and to purchase land, erect buildings, and provide for the compensation of officers and agents to be employed

in the establishment and management of such libraries.

It is because you have so nobly responded to such calls as these, and by your generosity have given us this "opportunity" to acquire and dispense "intelligence among all classes of the community," that we render you hearty thanks.

We cannot doubt that the City of Concord will recognize its duty, esteeming it also a privilege and pleasure, to provide by liberal appropriations through all coming time for the maintenance and support of this institution.

You have given us in this connection a "Shakespeare room." We shall gladly assemble therein to read and study the works of the immortal bard; and when we review the story of Antony and Cleopatra, perhaps we may call to mind that Cleopatra was presented by her infatuated slave with two hundred thousand volumes, which afterward became a part of the magnificent Alexandrian library.

The reading-room and the Shakespeare room will furnish opportunities not heretofore afforded for social intercourse, and for conversation about the books we are reading and the "books that have helped us." Surrounded by the atmosphere of books, we may compare impressions and exchange thoughts and opinions concerning them; and we shall have less of that sober feeling which we have all experienced, and which the poet Wordsworth expressed when he wrote,—

“ Often have I sighed to measure  
By myself a lonely pleasure,—  
Sighed to think I read a book,  
Only read, perhaps, by me.”

The ancients held their libraries in religious veneration. They were preserved in sacred places, and the earliest librarians were priests. The oldest library of which we have historical record was founded at Memphis by an Egyptian king. It was located in the royal palace, and was magnificently adorned by statues of the divinities. Upon its portals were inscribed the words,—“THE NOURISHMENT OF THE SOUL,” or, according to Diodorus, “The medicine of the mind.”

So, my friends, this building shall be a sanctified temple. It shall be for the suppression of idleness and vice, and for the inculcation of virtue;—for harm cannot come to the souls of those who occupy or recreate themselves with good books. Here shall be found development for the intellect, enlargement and strength for the mind. Here we shall find the stimulus of honest work, and the inspiration of hope and ambition. Here we may solace ourselves with the sweet illusions of imagination. Here human hearts shall become wiser and happier; better and more fruitful; more gentle and courteous; less rude and selfish; more noble, less degraded; more blessed, less accursed;—and the flowers and fruits nourished by these “savory influences” shall not wither or die. They shall flourish through all the changes of time,

surviving the season of youth and beauty, lasting through middle life, adorning and sanctifying the scenes of old age. This habitation shall thus be for us—as such places were for them of old time—a temple for the purification and the “nourishment of the soul.”

The Mayor then called upon the Rev. F. D. AYER, D. D., pastor of the First Congregational Church of Concord, to offer prayer.

### PRAYER.

Our Heavenly Father, the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage. In the midst of our mercies, and with every new gift, we desire to acknowledge Thee, and to give Thee thanks. We praise Thee for all the blessings of our civil and religious liberty; that Thou didst guide our fathers as they founded here the institutions of learning and religion. Thou didst teach them to plant the school beside the church, and gavest loyalty to intelligencè and virtue while they labored to advance the privileges for both. We remember with gratitude to-day the debt we owe to the early settlers of this town for the personal virtues that were theirs, for the homes they planted, for the schools they organized, and for the church of God that they loved. We praise Thee that from generation to generation those who have followed them have had the same spirit, and have here maintained those institutions that have



marked our history. Aid us who have entered into this inheritance, and to whom come the duties and privileges of maintaining them, that we may be faithful to our day and generation, and may increase these blessings while we use them. Especially would we give thanks to-day, standing in this new gift to public intelligence, for those who founded this City Library, and who have watched over and enlarged it. We thank Thee that we are capable of using such a gift; that we can receive the thoughts of others, and learn wisdom and good from those who have gone before us, but have left their best thoughts in books that may keep us company. We praise Thee for all that this library has thus done in the years gone,—and our prayer is that with this beautiful and commodious building its usefulness may be enlarged; that it may stand among the many useful institutions that bless our fair city, a perpetual fountain of light and knowledge. We give thanks for the life and labor of those whose names are linked with this gift; for the life Thou gavest them, and that they held with us; for the home, intelligent and hospitable; for their influence, so many years in our city, in favor of all that is good, true, and virtuous; for their unwearied labor in behalf of learning and charity; and for that interest in our weal that grew with the years. Let thy blessing abide upon this son and daughter, who in filial affection and in a like love to this people have purchased and renewed this building, and have now presented it to this city. May this fitting memorial of the



parents, a monument more lasting than the granite, bear also their desire and influence along the ages. Reward them for their love to the departed and to us, and may this act of filial reverence and beneficent desire unfold in rich blessing upon their hearts while it blesses us. Now, as we devote this building to the uses of pure knowledge and growing intelligence, we ask that Thou wilt guard it: let it abide and be a delight to coming generations. Here let the young find inspiration and guidance to better living and more useful service; here may weary Labor find an hour of rest, and gain new motive to endeavor, new power to achieve; here may Leisure find a blessed companionship; and here may the aged and ripened in life find a quiet rest and joy. Going out from these shelves, may wise teachers enter and find hospitality in all our homes. So, to all of us, may this library make perpetual our school-day, and aid to prolong our learning of useful truth to the end of life. Let thy blessing rest upon the Trustees of this library, and upon all the officers of our city government, in the discharge of their duties. Our Father, as we devote this building to its uses for ourselves and for those after us, with this and all our gifts we desire to consecrate anew ourselves to Thee and to labor for our fellow-men. We ask all, and give ourselves, in the name of the Beloved. Amen.

The exercises were brought to a close by the singing of "Auld Lang Syne," in which the audience joined.



## APPENDIX.



## APPENDIX.

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[From the CONCORD EVENING MONITOR, Saturday, Oct. 13, 1888.]

### THE FOWLER MEMORIAL.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW LIBRARY BUILDING.

##### HISTORICAL SKETCH.

The new Fowler Library Building, the munificent gift to the city of William P. and Clara M. Fowler, is now completed, the entire outlay, including the furnishing, being about \$25,000. Its location on the corner of School and State streets is central, and its surroundings are all that could be desired. The property was purchased from the L. D. Brown estate, and the building was the substantial brick residence of that gentleman. It was originally built in the most thorough manner, and as remodelled from plans by Walker & Best, of Boston, will furnish ample accommodations for the city library for years to come. It is two stories in height, with a basement, is well lighted and ventilated, and can be enlarged, should occasion require, without injury to the architectural symmetry of the building. The changes on the exterior of the building have been unimportant, consisting mainly of the removal of the porticos and piazzas, and the remodelling of the roof projection; but the alterations of the interior have been complete. The

old partitions and stairways were removed, so that everything is new and in modern style. The lot is now having a new curbing put around it, after which it will be graded and turfed.

There are two entrances, one from School and the other from State street, both of which are reached by granite steps, and both have porticos of handsome design. The School Street entrance is the main one, and opens into a large vestibule, which contains niches for busts. This opens into a two-storied delivery-room, 22 feet by 15½, lighted with triple windows, the delivery-desk being on the right of the entrance. Placed over the entrance to the delivery-room is the following inscription: "This building was presented to the City of Concord by William P. and Clara M. Fowler, in grateful and loving remembrance of their parents, Asa Fowler and Mary C. K. Fowler, for fifty years residents of Concord, and always active promoters of the educational and intellectual improvement of its citizens."

Opposite the delivery-room is the reading-room, 18 by 30 feet, while the office of the librarian is on the right of the vestibule and adjacent to the delivery-desk. To the right of the desk is the library proper, 20 by 27 feet, two stories in height, with a winding iron stairway, and practically fire proof. It contains alcove book-cases with a capacity of 23,000 volumes. An open gallery, with a handsome balustrade 10 by 23 feet, adjoins the upper story of the library, and is designed for the accommodation of foreign books. The second floor, which is reached from the vestibule by a broad oaken staircase, contains the trustees' office, 14 by 25 feet; a room, directly over the reading-room, which it is proposed to set apart for a "Shakespeare Club Room;" and a cloak-



room. The Shakespeare, librarian's, and reading rooms are fitted with fire-places. The basement will contain the heating apparatus, and rooms for storage and book-binding purposes.

The interior is handsomely finished in hard wood, mostly oak, and, with the ceilings painted in oil, presents a rich and tasteful appearance. The ceiling of the main room is especially noticeable, and is finished in water colors by Strauss of Boston. Altogether the library building is one of which the city may well be proud, and for which Mr. and Miss Fowler, as well as their parents, in whose memory it is given, will always be held in grateful remembrance by Concord people.

The contract for the entire work was awarded to E. B. Hutchinson, and it has been carried out in a manner most creditable to that gentleman. The very best of materials have been used, and none but skilful workmen employed.

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## LIBRARIES IN CONCORD.

An act passed by the general court, December 7, 1798, incorporated Timothy Walker, John Bradley, Jonathan Eastman, and their associates, by the name of "The Proprietors of Concord Library," and authorized them to raise money by subscription, donations, etc., and to hold property for the benefit of the library to the amount of one thousand dollars. A library of valuable books was collected, which was sustained, and proved highly useful for about twenty-five years.

This seems to have been the first library of any great account established in Concord. After it was given up, libraries were established by book-sellers and others,

from which books were loaned to readers for a weekly compensation.

After the mills were built at Fisherville, a library was started by residents in that place, which is still in existence. Nearly every religious society has a Sunday-school library, and some of the higher schools. The High School library was unfortunately lost by the fire which destroyed the High School building last spring.

The citizens of Concord also have access to the State library, essentially a law library, but containing many valuable books on other subjects, and the library of the New Hampshire Historical Society, containing a mass of antique documents which it would be hard to replace. The Young Men's Christian Association also have a considerable library for the use of their patrons.

By a law passed at the session of the legislature in 1849, any town in the state, at a meeting duly called for the purpose, was authorized to raise and appropriate money for the purchase of books, maps, charts, periodicals, and other publications, and provide for the establishment and perpetual maintenance of a public library, the use of which should be free to every inhabitant of the town.

At the annual meeting of the town of Concord, March, 1850, the attention of the town was called to the subject by an article in the warrant calling the meeting, and Sylvester Dana, Asa Fowler, Jacob A. Potter, Moses Shute, and Abel Baker were appointed "a committee to report at the next town-meeting what action the town should take in relation to the establishment and perpetual maintenance of a public library for the free use of all the inhabitants thereof, and what sum of money they should raise and appropriate for that purpose."

This committee made a report [see page 81] at the annual meeting in March, 1852, in which, after setting forth the benefits to be derived from a public library, and the necessity existing for its establishment, they submitted the following resolutions, which the town voted to accept and adopt:

*Resolved*, That to promote the general diffusion of intelligence among all classes, and counteract the tendencies to dissipation that exist in every community, it is expedient that a public library, for the free use of all our inhabitants, subject to necessary rules and regulations for its proper management and careful preservation, be established and forever maintained in the town of Concord.

*Resolved*, That the sum of one thousand dollars be and hereby is raised and appropriated for the purpose of purchasing books, maps, charts, periodical and other publications, for the commencement of such library, the renting of a suitable room for its accommodation, and warming and lighting the same, and the compensation of such officers and agents as may be necessarily employed in its establishment and management, during the ensuing year.

*Resolved*, That a committee of three disinterested and competent citizens, to be denominated the Committee on the Public Library, shall as soon as practicable be appointed by the selectmen, whose duty it shall be to expend the above sum in accordance with the foregoing resolution, and make report of their doings at the next annual meeting, and that a like committee shall annually hereafter be appointed by the selectmen in the month of March.

*Resolved*, That besides taking charge of the public library, and making and establishing rules and regulations for its control and the management of its affairs, which they are hereby authorized and empowered to do, and expending and accounting annually for all moneys appropriated for its support, and making an annual report to the town of the condition and prospects, it shall be the duty of the committee on the public library to

solicit and receive, from citizens of the town and others, donations of money, books, maps, charts, and other publications for the increase of said library, and to use their best efforts, by every laudable means, to promote and perpetuate its growth, prosperity, and usefulness.

This appears to have been all the action taken by the town in regard to the establishment of a public library.

At the annual meeting in March, 1853, the town voted to accept the city charter granted by the legislature in 1849, under the provisions of which a city government was elected and inaugurated.

No action seems to have been taken for the establishment of a library by the city government until August 26, 1855, when an ordinance for that purpose was passed.

By this ordinance the sum of fifteen hundred dollars was appropriated, and ordered to be paid out of any money in the city treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the purpose of establishing, commencing, and accommodating such library, a sum not exceeding three hundred dollars of which was allowed to be expended in procuring furniture, fixtures, and such other articles as might be necessary for its proper accommodation during the current municipal year, the remainder to be expended in the purchase of books, maps, charts, and other publications for its commencement and increase.

A board of trustees, consisting of one member from each ward into which the city was divided, was directed to be elected by the city government yearly, and their duties were prescribed, provision being made that they should receive no compensation for their services.

The first board of trustees was elected April 5, 1856, and consisted of

David A. Brown, Ward 1.  
Thomas D. Potter, Ward 2.  
Simeon Abbott, Ward 3.  
Amos Hadley, Ward 4.  
William H. Bartlett, Ward 5.  
Artemas B. Muzzey, Ward 6.  
Jeremiah S. Noyes, Ward 7.

The board of trustees organized April 12, 1856, by the choice of

Thomas D. Potter, President.  
Jeremiah S. Noyes, Treasurer.  
Artemas B. Muzzey, Secretary.

September 23, 1856, Mr. Muzzey was appointed agent to select and purchase books for the library to an amount not exceeding one thousand dollars, and instructed to proceed in the discharge of his duties immediately.

January 3, 1857, Mr. Andrew Capen was chosen librarian, provided "he will serve for fifty dollars a year," and the library was opened to the public shortly after.

It was kept at first in the City Hall building, on the second floor, directly above the city clerk's office and the rooms of the city council, where it remained until early in 1876, when it was removed to the Board of Trade building.

Mr. Capen resigned his position in November, 1857, and Frederick S. Crawford was appointed to fill the vacancy shortly after. He held the office until February 1, 1882, when he was succeeded by Daniel S. Secomb.

Following is a statement of money received for the support of the library during its existence :



|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| First appropriation, City,                          | \$1,500.00  |
| Annual appropriations, amount,                      | 26,431.37   |
| Avails of G. P. Lyon fund,                          | 1,429.45    |
| Avails of Franklin Pierce fund,                     | 945.67      |
| Received for cards sold, and sundries,              | 5,057.41    |
| Presented by the ladies of Concord, February, 1857, | 381.66      |
|   | <hr/>       |
|   | \$35,745.56 |

Out of this amount, \$4,800 has been paid for rent, besides the running expenses of the library, and insurance, which has left a very moderate sum in the hands of the trustees for the increase of the library.

The circulation of books and pamphlets, during the year ending September 1, 1888, was as follows :

|                  |       |              |       |
|------------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| September, 1887, | 3,152 | March, 1888, | 4,351 |
| October, “       | 3,753 | April, “     | 4,002 |
| November, “      | 3,757 | May, “       | 4,615 |
| December, “      | 3,852 | June, “      | 4,867 |
| January, 1888,   | 3,830 | July, “      | 3,910 |
| February, “      | 3,933 | August, “    | 2,090 |
|                  |       |              | <hr/> |

Volumes given out during the year, 46,112

Greatest number given out in one day, May 19, 462.

Least number given out in one day, June 26, 30.

Greatest number in one week, week ending May 19, 1,161.

Least number in one week, week ending September 10, 1887, 710.

The yearly charge of twenty-five cents to each patron of the library was abandoned April 1, 1888, as it was found to conflict with the provisions of the law authorizing the establishment of public libraries.

An appropriation having been made by the city government for that purpose, arrangements were made by the



trustees of the library for the conveyance of books, and their delivery to its patrons in Penacook twice a week.

The number sent there now averages over one hundred per week, and is increasing.

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### COPY OF DEED.

#### KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS,

That we, William P. Fowler, of Boston, in the County of Suffolk and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and Clara M. Fowler, of Concord, in the County of Merrimack and State of New Hampshire, in consideration of one dollar and other good considerations to us in hand, before the delivery hereof, well and truly paid by the City of Concord, New Hampshire, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, do hereby remise, release, and forever quitclaim unto the said City of Concord the following described parcel of land situated in said Concord, together with the buildings thereon and the furniture in said buildings contained. Said parcel is described as follows, namely: Beginning at the intersection of the east line of State street with the north line of School street, and running thence northerly by the east line of State street, eighty-eight and two tenths (88.2) feet, to land now or late of Nathaniel White; thence deflecting eighty-nine degrees and fifty-two minutes ( $89^{\circ} 52'$ ) to the right, and running easterly by land of said White

ninety-six (96) feet, more or less, to a stake ; then turning at about a right angle and running southerly parallel with the east line of State street ninety-two feet and ten inches ( $92\frac{10}{12}$ ), more or less, to the north line of School street at the westerly side of the post of the iron fence ; thence turning and running westerly by the north line of School street ninety-six (96) feet, more or less, to the point of beginning ;—meaning to convey the whole of the estate conveyed to us, June 29th, 1887, by Lurana C. Brown, by deed recorded in Merrimack Records, Lib. 279, Fol. 28, except a strip off the easterly end thereof, next land of Mrs. White, of the width of thirty-six feet and five inches ( $36\frac{5}{12}$ ). To use the same, and the buildings upon the same, for a Public Library Building, in which shall be located a Public Library and Reading-Room, and for no other purpose ; except that the room known as the “Shakespeare Club Room” shall be used, under proper restrictions to be prescribed by the trustees of the Public Library, as a place of meeting and study for any club or association, and the several members thereof, now or hereafter formed in said Concord for the purpose of reading and studying the works of William Shakespeare ; and except also, that, in the discretion of said trustees, the room known as the “Museum” may be used as a receptacle for a museum, which shall be accessible to the public under regulations to be prescribed by said trustees : *Provided, however*, that the use of the said Library, and of said Reading-Room, “Shakespeare Club Room,” and “Museum” shall always be free to the inhabitants of said Concord, and that the library shall be open at seasonable hours every week day, and that the Reading-Room shall be open at seasonable hours every day throughout the year : *and pro-*

*vided, also*, that the inscription over the door leading from the vestibule into the delivery-room, and that over the entrance to the School street porch, shall always be and remain as and where they now are, namely,—Over the delivery-room door, the words “This building was presented to the City of Concord, October 18, 1888, by William P. Fowler and Clara M. Fowler, in grateful and loving remembrance of their parents, Asa Fowler and Mary C. K. Fowler, for fifty years residents of Concord, and always active promoters of the educational and intellectual advancement of its citizens;” and over the entrance to School street porch the words “The Fowler Library Building.”

To have and to hold the granted premises, with all the privileges and appurtenances thereunto belonging, to the said City of Concord, to the uses and behoof forever, as herein before set forth, and none other: *Provided, however*, and this deed is upon the express condition, that if said building, or any portion thereof, or any portion of the granted premises, shall be at any time used for any other purpose than as above stated, or if any other of the conditions in this deed set forth shall be broken, then, and at the time of the breaking of such condition, the said granted premises shall at once revert to the grantors and their heirs, and the estate of said City of Concord shall thereupon cease and determine.

And we do hereby, for ourselves and our heirs, executors, and administrators, covenant with the said grantee that the granted premises are free from all incumbrances made or suffered by us, or either of us, except as aforesaid, and that we will, and our heirs, executors, and administrators shall, warrant and defend the same to the said grantee forever against the lawful claims and de-

mands of all persons claiming by, through, or under us, except as aforesaid, but against none other.

In witness whereof, we, the said William P. Fowler and Clara M. Fowler, both unmarried, hereto set our hands and seals this eighteenth day of October, in the year one thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight.

Signed and sealed in the presence of

CHARLES R. CORNING.

JAMES H. CHASE.

WILLIAM P. FOWLER (L. S.)

CLARA M. FOWLER (L. S.)

State of New Hampshire, Merrimack ss.

CONCORD, October 18, 1888.

Then personally appeared the above named William P. Fowler and Clara M. Fowler, and severally acknowledged the foregoing instrument to be their free and voluntary act and deed.

Before me,

CHARLES R. CORNING,  
*Justice of the Peace.*

Received October 19, 9:15 A. M., 1888.

Recorded and examined.

CHARLES H. ORDWAY,  
*Register.*

## REPORT

Of a Committee (1852) appointed by the town of Concord, with reference to "the establishment and perpetual maintenance of a public library for the use of all the inhabitants thereof."

The importance of that knowledge which is alone furnished by the study and perusal of standard books and publications will be denied by no one who justly appreciates the powers and necessities of the human mind. Upon the arts and sciences, and upon nearly every trade and profession, there are now an abundance of works, highly useful, not to say indispensable, to every one who would attain a thorough acquaintance with the business to which he is devoted. If to these are added those useful works of a more strictly literary and those of a miscellaneous character (from which the mass of mankind derive most of their book knowledge), we find, without entering the domain of fiction, a number so extensive as to preclude their acquisition by all persons in the ordinary circumstances of life. Hence has arisen the necessity of libraries, which in almost every age of the world have been collected by governments, or the united efforts of individuals, and have dispensed the light of civilization to vast multitudes, and transmitted to our generation the history of far distant ages, that would otherwise be shrouded in impenetrable obscurity.

While in a country like ours few collections of books can compare in extent with those gathered under royal patronage during successive centuries, yet they have proved not inferior to them in practical usefulness. Until recently the most extensive libraries on this side of the Atlantic were connected with colleges and seminaries of learning; but as these were not adequate or adapted for the mass of the people, the enterprise and benevolence of individuals have been frequently elicited in founding libraries of a more general character. Many of these



located in the cities now rival those connected with the most venerable of American universities. Of this description, though on a very limited scale, are the circulating libraries existing in many towns of this state. The advantages of all such institutions, however, are necessarily restricted, either to the proprietors, or to particular classes of the community, and the great mass of the people derive but little direct benefit from them. They are not, and from the nature of the case they cannot be, thrown open without charge for the accommodation of the entire population. Therefore exists the necessity for libraries of a more public and universal character, which, under the control and management of the municipal authority, are adapted for supplying the wants of all. Libraries of this description are no new or untried experiments. In England, France, Belgium, Germany, and in some parts of our own country, they have become somewhat numerous. The town library of Bologna in France, containing 21,000 volumes, conducted upon the most liberal system and with great economy, has been established for more than half a century, and attended with the most happy results. The evidence taken in 1849 by a committee of the British House of Commons proved the great moral and social value of libraries, in their tendency to restrain persons from crime, dissipation, and the brutal sports formerly so prevalent in that kingdom.

The various reasons for founding a public library have a far more forcible application in this than in most other towns. A large proportion of our population consists of those who come from other parts of the state, and are here, with many of native origin, employed in occupations chiefly mechanical. A majority of them upon their arrival are minors, whose tastes and habits remain to be formed. At the end of their daily avocations, many of them, unaccustomed to spending their evenings in mental improvement, and perhaps feeling not particularly at home at the place of their temporary residence, are wont to saunter forth to the haunts of intemperance and vice, where by frequent resort their tastes soon become vitiated, and weaned



from everything of an intellectual nature ; and they arrive at manhood uninformed, dissipated,—a curse instead of a blessing to society. This is no fancy statement. Its sad reality has been too often illustrated in the history of many a youth who has entered this town with the fairest character and prospects, and whose subsequent career has been the occasion of profound sorrow to his friends and of unmitigated shame to himself. Nor is this illustration by any means confined to those coming among us from abroad. In not a few instances our native youth, excuselessly neglected and left without the restraints of parental authority, have developed a similar history. Neither religious nor any other influences have availed to rescue them from a downward course.

A public library under proper control, open during the evenings of at least the colder months of the year, would furnish a healthful resort and agreeable entertainment for this necessitous and much neglected class, and would tend greatly to mitigate, if not remove, the evils above set forth. It would also administer to the wants of our whole community of both sexes, who, under suitable regulations, might take out books for perusal. Indeed, the advantages of such an institution are so numerous and apparent as to preclude the necessity of recapitulating them. They are constantly manifested in the life and character of those well informed citizens who have been the beneficiaries of establishments of a less universal description in other places,—some of whom have derived nearly the whole of their education from the Mechanics' or Merchants' Library Associations located at Boston.

The establishment of a library here adequate to the wants of all our people will universally be admitted as desirable, and the only question is how far it should owe its origin and maintenance to the town. Nearly every argument for a system of common-school education at the public expense would apply in favor of an institution tending to perfect and render available the elementary knowledge acquired in the school-house. If it is a legitimate object of municipal government to sow the seeds

of knowledge, surely it cannot be less so to look after and tend the plant, and encourage it to produce wholesome fruit.

The legislature of New Hampshire in 1849 passed a law "providing for the establishment of public libraries" by towns voting to do so, which act confers all the requisite authority therefor.

If a public library is commenced under the auspices of the town, it will unquestionably receive many accessions of books from individuals, and be regarded as a worthy object on which to bestow legacies and donations in money. A gentleman residing out of the state has expressed an intention of making it a gift of four hundred dollars immediately upon its commencement. It will also be entitled to receive from the secretary of state "a copy of the laws, journals, and all other works published by authority of the state." And it will not be neglected in the generous disbursement of public documents issued by the national government.

For its organization and maintenance during the first year it is proposed to appropriate not over a sixth part of the amount which the town has, at some annual meetings, voted for the support of schools; and this, it is presumed, will not be considered excessive or burdensome by any who will fully estimate the benefits to arise from its outlay.

In conclusion, the committee submit the following resolutions [see p. 73], embodying the results of their investigations upon this subject.

SYLVESTER DANA,  
ASA FOWLER,  
J. A. POTTER,  
MOSES SHUTE,  
ABEL BAKER,

*Committee.*

March 9th, 1852.











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| DATE.   | NAME OF BORROWER.<br>J. J. J. |

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